

Department of the Navy Civilian Benefits Center

Benefits Bulletin 2011-6

Frequently Asked Questions About Benefits

This bulletin provides answers to some of the most frequently asked employee questions about benefits. If you need additional information, please call the Benefits Line at 888-320-2917 and select menu option #4 to talk to a Customer Service Representative (CSR). CSRs are available 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays. The TTY number for the deaf and hard of hearing is 866-328-9889.

What is a Qualifying Life Event (QLE) and How Does It Affect My Benefits? A QLE is an event that may occur during your federal career or after your retirement. Marriage, death and acquisition of a child are common QLEs but there are others. A QLE may allow you to make certain changes to your benefits. A table of QLEs and changes permitted is available at http://www.opm.gov/insure/lifeevents/index.asp.

Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)

What Happens to a Self and Family FEHB Enrollment When There Are No Family Members? A Self and Family enrollment does not automatically change to a Self Only enrollment when you no longer have family members (a spouse or children under age 26) eligible for coverage. If the last digit of your FEHB enrollment code is 2 or 5, you are enrolled in a Self and Family plan (Examples: 105, 112, 315, 342, 455, LP2, etc). If you are enrolled in a Self and Family plan and have no eligible family members call the Benefits Line. You need to call the Benefits Line even if you receive a letter from your carrier indicating they have changed your enrollment to a Self Only plan, otherwise you will continue to pay for a Self and Family enrollment.

Can My Child Continue Coverage Under My FEHB Enrollment After Turning Age 26? When your child reaches age 26, he/she is no longer covered under your FEHB enrollment unless the child is incapable of self-support because of a physical or mental disability that existed before the child reached age 26. If you have a child who may qualify for continued coverage call the Benefits Line at least 60 days before the child turns age 26 to discuss the documentation requirements. Additional information is available at

http://www.public.navy.mil/donhr/Benefits/InsurancePrograms/fehb/Pages/EligibleFamilyMembers.aspx.

Can My Child Over Age 26 Elect FEHB Coverage? Your child can enroll in FEHB Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) for a period of 36 months. There is no government contribution to the FEHB premiums under TCC. The election must be made within 60 days from the date the child reaches age 26. Additional information is available at

http://www.public.navv.mil/donhr/Benefits/InsurancePrograms/fehb/Pages/CoverageForAChild.aspx.

Can My Former Spouse Be Included Under My FEHB Enrollment? You cannot include a former spouse as a family member under your FEHB enrollment once you are divorced, even if the divorce decree specifies that you provide health insurance coverage for this person. A former spouse can elect FEHB coverage under the provisions of TCC and/or the Spouse Equity Act. Additional information is available at

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http://www.public.navy.mil/donhr/Benefits/InsurancePrograms/fehb/Pages/CoverageForAFormerSpouse.aspx.

How Does Medicare Affect My FEHB? When you become eligible for Medicare at age 65, you may change your FEHB enrollment to any available plan or option at any time beginning 30 days before you become eligible for Medicare. You may use this enrollment change opportunity only once. You may also change your enrollment during the Benefits Open Season or in conjunction with a QLE. If you continue to work after age 65, your FEHB will pay as the primary carrier and Medicare will be the secondary carrier. After you retire, Medicare will pay as the primary carrier and your FEHB plan will be the secondary carrier. Additional information about Medicare and the FEHB program is available at http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/medicare/index.asp.

Are Temporary Employees Eligible to Enroll in FEHB? If your position is excluded from FEHB coverage because your appointment is limited to one year or less, you will be eligible to enroll in FEHB when you have completed one year of current continuous employment, excluding any break in service of 5 days or less. You must pay both the employee and the Government shares of the premium. You must enroll within 60 days of eligibility by using the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) or by calling the Benefits Line.

When is the Next Benefits Open Season? The next Benefits Open Season will be November 14 – December 12, 2011. During the Open Season you can make changes to your health insurance, dental/vision insurance and enroll in flexible spending account. Outside of the Open Season you may be eligible to make FEHB changes in conjunction with a QLE.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (FEGLI)

When Does FEGLI Premiums Increase?

Basic Insurance. The rate for Basic is \$0.15 per \$1,000 of coverage. When you receive a pay increase sufficient enough to raise your pay to the next \$1,000, your premiums for Basic will increase.

Optional Insurance. The premiums for Options A, B and C are based on 5 year increment age groups. When you reach a new age group (30, 35, 45, 50, 55 etc.) your premiums for Options A, B and C will increase.

A complete list of FEGLI premiums and a calculator to help you determine the cost and value of your life insurance is available at http://www.opm.gov/insure/life/rates/em_rates.asp.

What Happens to Option C - Family When There Are No Family Members? The Option C - Family enrollment does not automatically stop when you no longer have eligible family members (a spouse or children under age 22). You will continue to pay for Option C until you initiate a change by calling the Benefits Line or by using EBIS.

How Can I Elect FEGLI Coverage After My Initially Eligibility as a New Employee? If you have a QLE you may be eligible to make a FEGLI election.

If you waived Basic coverage or did not elect Options A or B you may elect coverage (or increase coverage) if:

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- (1) It has been one year since your last election,
- (2) You successfully pass a physical (at your own expense), and
- (3) You are approved by the Office of Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (OFEGLI).

If you want to apply for FEGLI coverage by taking a physical please call the Benefits Line.

Note: You cannot elect Option C – Family by taking a physical but you may be able to elect Option C in conjunction with a QLE.

When is the Next FEGLI Open Season? There is no annual open season for life insurance. The CBC will issue information if and when there is an open season. The most recent FEGLI open seasons were held from September 1 - September 30, 2004 and in 1999.

Can I Receive FEGLI Benefits While I Am Still Living? FEGLI is group term insurance that does not have any cash value and you cannot borrow against your coverage. The only opportunities to get money from your coverage while you are still living are: (1) if you are terminally ill and qualify for Living Benefits or (2) if you are terminally or chronically ill and assign your coverage to a viatical settlement firm. Additional information about Living Benefits is available at http://www.public.navy.mil/donhr/Benefits/InsurancePrograms/fegli/Pages/LivingBenefits.aspx.

MISCELLANEOUS

What Automated System Do I Use? If you are confused about which automated system to use to make a payroll or benefits change the chart at http://www.public.navy.mil/donhr/Benefits/newemployee/Pages/PointMeInTheRightDirection.aspx can help you.

Do I Need a Designation of Beneficiary? The purpose of a designation of beneficiary is to determine how your benefits will be distributed in the event of your death. Benefits for FEGLI, retirement, Thrift Savings Plan, and unpaid compensation are automatically distributed in the following order of precedence:

- First, to your widow or widower;
- Second, to your child or children, with the share of any deceased child distributed among descendants of that child;
- Third, if none of the above, to your parents in equal shares or the entire amount to your surviving parent;
- Fourth, if none of the above, to the executor or administrator of your estate;
- Fifth, if none of the above, to your other next of kin as determined under the laws of the State where you lived.

An exception to the order of precedence is for FEGLI. If you assigned ownership of your FEGLI, benefits will be paid:

- First, to the beneficiaries designated by your assignees, if any;
- Second, if there is no beneficiary, to your assignees.

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If you did not assign FEGLI ownership and there is a valid court order on file, benefits will be paid according to that court order

You are not required to complete a designation of beneficiary form if you want your benefits distributed according to the order listed above. If you want benefits paid to someone else or in a different order, you must designate a beneficiary. If you complete a designation of beneficiary form, you are responsible for ensuring that it remains accurate. Benefits will be paid based on a valid designation, regardless of whether that designation still reflects your intentions. Information about the standard order of precedence and how to change your beneficiary is available at http://www.public.navy.mil/donhr/Benefits/designations/Pages/Default.aspx.

How Do I Change My Mailing Address? Information about how to change your mailing address is available at http://www.public.navy.mil/donhr/Benefits/resources/Documents/CBC%2012800-33%20How%20to%20Update%20Your%20Mailing%20Address.pdf.

How Do I Change My Name? Your local HRO can provide information about the procedure to change your name.

How Can I Verify My Employment? Anytime you need verification of your employment or salary, such as when you apply for an apartment lease, car loans, mortgage, and other major loans, you will use MyBiz. Additional information is available at http://www.public.navy.mil/DONHR/Employment/Pages/MyBizEmploymentVerification.aspx.

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